

A photograph of a woman with short brown hair and bangs, smiling broadly while holding a young girl with blonde pigtails. The girl is also smiling and has her arms around the woman's neck. They are outdoors in a grassy area with trees in the background.

Playing with Your 3- to 5-Year-Old

Why is it important for my child to be active and play?

- She learns through play.
- Play helps her get along with others.
- Play helps her learn new skills and use her imagination.
- Play helps her learn about words, feelings and thoughts.
- Seeing and doing new things helps her brain to grow.

How can I make activity fun and encourage my child to play?

- Play with your child. She will enjoy spending time with you. Find activities that you both enjoy.
- Be a role model for her. She will watch you and want to be like you.
- Encourage her to play outside every day. Fresh air is good and helps her sleep better at night.
- She needs planned activity as well as free play. Aim for at least 60 minutes of active play each day.

Your child can do these activities: catch, gallop, crawl, throw, hop, tumble, skip, toss, kick, roll, dance and climb.

Preschoolers learn by:

- Copying
- Following examples
- Following simple directions
- Playing make believe
- Moving

Toys to play with:

- Hula hoops
- Beach balls/large balls
- Tricycle
- Jump ropes
- Plastic bat and ball
- Child-size toys: broom, rake
- Toy cars and trucks
- Blocks

Things at home to play with:

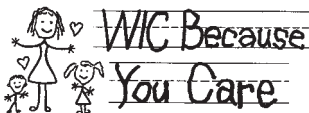
- Plastic coffee can lids (Frisbee™)
- Aluminum foil (make a ball)
- Empty boxes or baskets
- Dress-up clothes
- Run through sprinkler

Games to play:

- Dance to music
- Hopscotch
- Leap frog
- Hide-and-seek
- Jump rope

**Playing with your child helps her grow smarter,
stronger, healthier and happier.**

Developed by the California WIC Program.



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